Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. No changes to the claims are made herein.

Listing of Claims:

1. **(Currently Amended)** A method of determining an allowable order of changes in a distributed system, the method comprising the steps of:

determining existing relationship descriptions between components of the distributed system;

transforming acquired relationships into ordered tasks that are linked by temporal ordering constraints; and

creating an order of changes taking into account task relationship constraints.

2. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the order of changes is sequential.

3. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the order of changes is concurrent.

4. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 1, further comprising refining an incoming request for change by breaking the incoming request down into sub-requests.

5. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 4, further comprising computing an allowable order of changes by interacting with the distributed system.

6. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein creating the order of changes includes determining whether the ordered changes are conflicting and flagging such conflicts.

7. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the ordered changes are partially ordered.

8. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 1, wherein the ordered changes are totally ordered.

9. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the order of changes includes an estimate of the time required to complete a change.

10. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 4, wherein the a total change time is minimized by exploiting parallelism between change tasks.

11. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the creation of the order of changes further takes into account a requested change management operation.

12. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein a requester identifies one or more target systems within the distributed system by name.

13. **(Original)** The method of Claim 12, wherein the names of the target systems are unique physical identifiers.

14. **(Original)** The method of Claim 12, wherein the names of the target systems are logical names which refer to one or more physical systems.

15. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein a requester does not identify one or more target systems within the distributed system by name.

16. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of accessing and evaluating policy rules representing best practices.

17. **(Original)** The method of Claim 16, wherein the best practices include updating all affected software artifacts when a software artifact is updated.

18. **(Original)** The method of Claim 16, wherein the best practices include having a given set of software components installed on different systems.

19. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein one or more of the order of changes are persistently stored after being created.

20. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 1, wherein a component is one of a service, an application, middleware, hardware, an operating system, a storage system, a network device, and a system associated with ~~the~~ a computing environment.

21. **(Currently Amended)** A system for determining an allowable order of changes in a distributed system, the system comprising:

a processor; and

a memory storing code accessible by the processor to:

~~an arrangement for determining~~ determine existing relationship descriptions between components of the distributed system;

~~an arrangement for transforming~~ transform acquired relationships into ordered tasks that are linked by temporal ordering constraints; and

~~an arrangement for creating~~ create an order of changes taking into account task relationship constraints.

22. **(Original)** The system of Claim 21, wherein the order of changes is sequential.

23. **(Original)** The system of Claim 21, wherein the order of changes is concurrent.

24. **(Currently Amended)** The system of Claim 21, further comprising an arrangement for refining an incoming request for change by breaking the incoming request down into sub-requests.

25. **(Currently Amended)** The system of Claim 24, further comprising an arrangement for computing an allowable order of changes by interacting with the distributed system.

26. **(Original)** The system of Claim 21, wherein creating the order of changes includes determining whether the ordered changes are conflicting and flagging such conflicts.

27. **(Currently Amended)** The system of Claim 21, wherein the ordered changes are partially ordered.

28. **(Currently Amended)** The system of claim 21, wherein the ordered changes are totally ordered.

29. **(Original)** The system of Claim 21, wherein the order of changes includes an estimate of the time required to complete a change.

30. **(Currently Amended)** The system of Claim 24, wherein ~~the~~ a total change time is minimized by exploiting parallelism between change tasks.

31. **(Original)** The system of Claim 21, wherein the creation of the order of changes further takes into account a requested change management operation.

32. **(Original)** The system of Claim 21, wherein a requester identifies one or more target systems within the distributed system by name.

33. **(Original)** The system of Claim 32, wherein the names of the target systems are unique physical identifiers.

34. **(Original)** The system of Claim 32, wherein the names of the target systems are logical names which refer to one or more physical systems.

35. **(Original)** The system of Claim 21, wherein a requester does not identify one or more target systems within the distributed system by name.

36. **(Original)** The system of Claim 21, further comprising an arrangement for accessing and evaluating policy rules representing best practices.

37. **(Original)** The system of Claim 36, wherein the best practices include updating all affected software artifacts when a software artifact is updated.

38. **(Original)** The system of Claim 36, wherein the best practices include having a given set of software components installed on different systems.

39. **(Original)** The system of Claim 21, wherein one or more of the order of changes are persistently stored after being created.

40. **(Currently Amended)** The system of Claim 21, wherein a component is one of a service, an application, middleware, hardware, an operating system, a storage system, a network device, and a system associated with ~~the~~ a computing environment.

41. **(Currently Amended)** A program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for determining an allowable order of changes in a distributed system, said method comprising the steps of:

determining existing relationship descriptions between components of the distributed system;

transforming acquired relationships into ordered tasks that are linked by temporal ordering constraints; and

creating an order of changes taking into account task relationship constraints.